

an appropriate exhibit. A small showcase of shells could be used with a collection of books about shells, the sea-shore, fishing, etc.

If one or two shelves can be cleared, a small range of books can sometimes be featured in the ordinary shelving.

Once display work becomes a regular routine in the school library, the librarian will find unlimited opportunities to present attractive, appealing and effective displays.

THE 1950 SHORT COURSE IN RETROSPECT

V. SEAMONS

THE 1950 short course for librarians and assistants from smaller public libraries was concluded at the Library School on 3rd February. Its primary object, to improve the standard of library service by training students, is one of paramount importance to all New Zealanders and merits a share of publicity. The course was planned to provide an opportunity for study and discussion of books, of simple library methods, and especially of community service through public libraries, and as one of the fifteen students who attended I would say that its value was beyond the highest expectations. The results of it will be far-reaching, as they will be reflected from time to time in each of our home areas, ranging from Oamaru in the south to Whangarei in the north. Tribute must be paid to Miss N. Bateson, Director of the Library School, who with Mr G. T. Alley, Director of the National Library Service, prepared a comprehensive course of instruction which met the needs of us all, widely different as we were and each with library problems peculiar to our own districts.

In three and a half weeks of concentrated effort to assimilate the masses of information placed at our disposal we learned much more than the routine work of cataloguing, classifying, quick reference, and other indispensable requirements of the modern library. A panel of lecturers gave us a wonderful insight into the basic principles of library work as a whole, with special reference to the use and scope of the library, its part in community life and the right approach to the community. We were told what other countries are doing in this respect and how the pattern of library work has developed to the present stage, and we realized, slowly perhaps, what great possibilities lie ahead in the field of library work and the urgent need to understand our work in relation to the community. The library as it is being developed in New Zealand to-day is essentially a part of local body work (that is, of city, borough or county councils, and town boards) and in some cases free service is made possible only by reason of the great assistance given by the National Library Service. As parts of our country are still very isolated, in that they are not in touch with current library methods and functions, it is apparent that we should strive for a greater interchange of ideas between local body officers and National Library Service staff. This

Miss Seamons, who is Town Clerk and Secretary of the Library Committee, Te Karaka, attended the short course recently held at the Library School.

would go far towards reaching a common ground from which to achieve the ideal of being able to supply free to each reader any book required in his or her particular walk of life.

It was a carefully graduated course of instruction, so arranged and delivered that even the most inexperienced student was shown the path to good librarianship. Particularly do we remember these sessions: when Miss Bateson gave an outstanding address on the history and development of libraries in England and Canada; when Mr Alley spoke first on administration, and later his very interesting address on agriculture; Professor Gordon's two delightful lectures on the history of the novel; and the two occasions when Mr H. C. D. Somerset spoke, with very real understanding, on the needs of the community and how to meet them.

In addition to lectures on special aspects of our work, we were supplied with selective bibliographies of books suitable for children and young adults, and of books on such subjects as cooking and nutrition, interior decoration, carpentry, gardening and agriculture, with a resume of their chief features given by people who had wide acquaintance with them. Of necessity much material was compressed into narrow limits; nevertheless these bibliographies will be of inestimable value in our libraries as an aid to buying new stock, enlarging the request service and arranging loan collections.

To widen our knowledge by actual contact we visited the principal libraries in and near Wellington, and are indebted to the authorities who made available all information likely to be of use to us. The visit to the General Assembly Library and to the Alexander Turnbull Library was all too short and, despite the fact that our hosts did all that was possible for us in the time allotted, we felt that we had but touched the fringe of the knowledge that we might gain there; we realize that we were the victims of the time factor in the course.

In conclusion, we are grateful for the opportunity to attend this, the third course of its kind; it has given us a new outlook and stimulated us to fresh effort. Its success has been due largely to the enthusiasm of the lecturers and their genuine interest in our progress, and we look forward to the time when the short course will be regarded as a necessity for all librarians or assistants from smaller libraries who are not qualified to take the professional course. We return, each to our own centre, fired with the desire to make the library the focal point from which all members of the community may obtain, free of cost, the best books of the world's literature, art, philosophy and science.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THAT MAN AGAIN

SIR.—On return from my holiday I noticed your editorial remarks on my letter in *New Zealand Libraries*, v12: 277-278. Such sneers are not in keeping with the normal tone of professional journals.

The mere fact that you happen to dislike a contributor's opinion is no reason for calling it 'buffoonery'.

Yours, etc.,

D. H. BORCHARDT.

20th February, 1950.